AN INFALLIBLE

REMEDY

FOR THE

HIGH PRICES

OF

PROVISIONS.

TOGETHER WITH A

SCHEME

FOR LAYING OPEN THE

TRADE

TO THE

EAST-INDIES;

WITH AN

Addreſs to the Electors of Great-Britain.

Sanabilibus ægrotamur morbis. Seneca.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

TO

CHARLES JENKINSON, Esq.

ONE OF THE

LORDS of the TREASURY, &c. &c.

SIR,

THE rapid progress you have made through the great departments of state, is a stronger proof of your merit, than the highest encomiums that could possibly be bestowed upon you by the most eloquent pen; and while it manifestly bespeaks you possessed of superior virtues and abilities, (which, to the reproach of human nature, and to the honour of Jenkinson, are so seldom united in the same person) evidently denotes the sound judgment and patriotic intentions of that excellent nobleman, to whom you owe your promotion. For, if the state is happy in acquisition of an able minister and uncorrupt senator, it is certainly under great obligations to the man to whom it is indebted for such an acquisition. To LORD BUTE, therefore, this praise is due; and let it be acknowledged, with a becoming sense of the favour, that notwithstanding

ing all the ſcandal and abuſe which envy and malice have thrown upon his character, he has had the ſenſe to diſtinguiſh, and the goodneſs to countenance a gentleman, who is ſo well qualified to ſerve his king and country.

That the nation may be long bleſſed with ſuch an able and virtuous miniſter, is the ſincere prayer of,

SIR,

Your moſt humble

and moſt devoted Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE neceſſity of reducing the preſent high price of proviſions, and of keeping it, for the future, at a reaſonable ſtandard, and the inſufficiency of the ſeveral methods propoſed for that purpoſe by different writers, have ſtrongly prompted me to exert my weak abilities in the ſame noble cauſe, and to try if I could not, by ſome means or other, hit upon ſome ſcheme, that might more effectually anſwer ſo excellent an end. To this I was the rather induced, as neither Mr. J——ns nor his anſwerer have ſuggeſted any thing that could poſſibly be productive of the deſired effect. The former has contented himſelf with pointing out the cauſes and conſequences of the preſent high price of proviſions, without propoſing a ſingle remedy; the latter has confined himſelf to the remedy of reducing the ſalaries of all places under the government; a meaſure, which however neceſſary, is, I am afraid, very difficult to be executed, and which, were it actually executed, would procure to the people but a partial relief. I have endeavoured, in the following ſheets, to go upon a more excluſive plan, and to recommend not one, but a variety of remedies; from the joint operation of which,

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were they once ſuffered to operate in the fulleſt manner, the people, I am ſatisfied, might receive ſuch advantage, as they can never hope to obtain by any other means. If, after all, it ſhould be thought that I am more ſanguine than national in my expectations, I ſhall, at leaſt, enjoy the heart-felt ſatisfaction of having ſincerely meant to promote the public good. *In magnis voluiſſe ſat eſt.*

AN

AN

Eaſy, natural, conſtitutional, and infallible

REMEDY, &c.

When princes and miniſters are fired with a noble ambition to recommend themſelves to the affections and applauſes of the community, which they have under their immediate care and protection; with what zeal and ſteadineſs will they purſue thoſe meaſures, which are calculated to promote the intereſt of that body, whereof they are the head? under their adminiſtration there can be no juſt ground to complain of oppreſſion, or any incroachment on privileges. It is impoſſible but they muſt contrive laws adapted to the publick good, and with prudence and ſtrictneſs put them in execution, in defence of the innocent, and puniſhment of the guilty.

INNES.

DOCTOR INNES, from whom I have taken my motto, was as eminent in politics as in divinity; as good a phyſician of the body-politic, as of the ſoul. His

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diſtinguiſhed abilities in the latter capacity, are manifeſtly diſplayed in his excellent diſcourſe in defence of moral virtue; and his rare acompliſhments in the former quality, are as evidently conſpicuous in the method he propoſes for promoting trade and aggrandizing a nation. I have, therefore, quoted his ſentiments upon the conduct of able miniſters, which, I think, are very juſt, and particularly adapted to my ſubject.

INSTEAD of a curious knowledge of cocks and horſes, the principal qualification of ſome of our modern ſtateſmen, it is neceſſary to know the laws and conſtitution of one's own country, and to be thoroughly verſed in the political ſyſtem of Europe, in order to underſtand perfectly the real intereſt of our own, and of other powers. In this conſiſts the ſcience of government; not in the talent of noiſy declamation, which is *vox & prætera nihil*. A competent knowledge of theſe important points, and a proper application of that uſeful knowledge, will eaſily bring about all that the people can deſire, and all that the government can wiſh for. An union of abilities and principle is what we moſt ſtand in need of; talents are not wanting to comprehend our true intereſt, but honeſty to purſue it, is a very rare virtue. The political diſ-

order

order under which we now labour, is of a very complicated nature, and therefore requires the hand of a ſkilful phyſician; but how few, how very few, ſuch phyſicians are to be found!

I READILY agree with the * Spectator, where he ſays, that he is preaching to the wind; for he propoſes remedies, which will ſooner kill than cure. The complaints of the labouring people, on the account of the dearneſs of proviſions, and every other neceſſary of life; the intolerable load of taxes, with the proſpect of their *increaſing* in proportion to the *increaſe* of the expences of government, and the augmentation of the national debt by the decreaſe of the revenue, from a confined trade and great ſmuggling; theſe it is certain, are ſuch conſiderations as muſt greatly affect every intelligent perſon, who is capable of feeling for the diſtreſſes of his fellow-creatures. But the poſture of affairs, bad as it is, is not yet ſo bad, as to require ſuch deſperate remedies as the forcibly taking the property of private perſons, to be diſtributed among the public, which is as much as the moſt abſolute and tyrannical government could do. I am therefore aſtoniſhed, that the champions of liberty ſhould think of robbing one individual to enrich another, when more equitable means of ſupport may be

* A late political writer.

found; and that they ſhould be ſo much miſtaken, as to recommend meaſures ſo very inconſiſtent with that liberty which they would be thought to defend. For how *ſanguine* ſoever the body-politic may be, I cannot allow that ſome of the larger veins ſhould be opened immediately, to make a copious diſcharge of its rich blood. The *corrupted members*, it is true, ſhould be cut off, before they infect the maſs: but rich blood is too valuable to be thus needleſsly ſquandered; and nothing but the ignorance of unſkilful phyſicians could propoſe taking away the moſt invigorating part of the body, which, in caſes of extremity, is of the moſt ſervice. It brings to my mind the caſe of a gentleman, who, being in good health, was, through the importunity of his phyſician, prevailed upon to open a vein, which occaſioned his death, and this epitaph,

Eu eſtavo bueno, mas por eſtar melhor eſto aqui.
I was very well, but to be better, I am in my grave.

And this might happen to our body-politic, if, to alleviate the diſtreſſes of the labouring people, we ſhould attempt to deprive opulent individuals of a part of their wealth, in order to *equalize* property: and, therefore, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that the lovers of liberty and property will oppoſe

oppoſe this meaſure, which is of the moſt fatal tendency to a free people. For if government is once permitted, under any pretence or colour whatever, to ſeize upon the property of individuals, the power of miniſters (which is already too great) will be altogether uncontroulable, and adieu then to every thing that is dear to us; it being manifeſt that theſe pretences will happen ſo frequently, that no man can ſay what is his own, while it is ſubject to government; and we may ſafely ſuppoſe, without breach of charity, that *ſome* luxurious and venal miniſters will always have an itching palm for private property, which no part of the legiſlature, no, not even majeſty itſelf, has a right to invade.

Some writers alledge that nothing but aſſociations of all ranks of people to promote a ſpirit of œconomy and frugality, and *obliging* the higher orders of the people, not only to part with their *ruinous* luxuries, but alſo, in proportion to their wealth, to contribute to the diminution of the national debt, can remedy the evils complained of. For my part, I do not wiſh to ſee aſſociations among a people who are but too apt to be diſſatisfied, and who, in general, are greatly hurt by ſuch kind of meetings. Neither am I for taking away the luxuries of the great, which, ſo far from being

ruinous,

ruinous, I conſider as *advantageous* to a populous ſtate, by circulating that money, which, hoarded up, would be of no uſe to the public. I readily agree with Dr. Innes, in thinking, that *vice* and *luxury* do moſt miſerably invade and confound liberty and property; weaken every man's juſt rights and privileges; betray civil governors into miſmanagements, neglects, bad politics, and oppreſſion, that affect trade in the moſt ſenſible manner; while they ruin the credit of all ſorts and ſizes of trading people both at home and abroad, as they break forth into cunning, fraud, and villainy, and ſo put an end to all commerce whatever; and therefore in this light *private vices* are *publick miſchiefs*. But, I believe, the great may be *luxurious* without the *vice* which this author ſpeaks of; and, in that caſe, their luxuries will certainly have a contrary effect, and be an advantage to a populous and induſtrious people, who can only be ſupported by a large and extenſive trade, both foreign and domeſtic; and, therefore, in this confined ſenſe, and with this benevolent view, I am an advocate for the luxuries of the great. But, though I am not for taking away either their property, or their luxurious methods of employing it, yet, I own, it would greatly pleaſe me to ſee them (at leaſt ſuch of them as have more

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than they know what to do with) poſſeſs *virtue* enough to contribute plentifully to the neceſſities of government, with the humane intention of eaſing the burthen of the artificer and labourer, thouſands of whom are abſolutely ſtarving, and in a ſtate of deſperation: but all this I would have them to do freely, voluntarily, and of their own pure motion; not by force, nor in compliance with the dictates or commands of any imperious and overbearing miniſter.

I GRANT, that, if the buſineſs of the ſtate continue to be neglected, as it has hitherto been, through a ſcramble for PLACES, the effects of *inattention* may prove fatal; eſpecially if we ſhould have another war, which, for aught we know, may not be far off: at leaſt from the inſatiable ambition of the powers united by the FAMILY COMPACT, and the natural rivalſhip between theſe realms and our neighbours, it is what we ought to expect, and have the good policy to be prepared for. Nevertheleſs, violent and arbitrary meaſures ſhould be carefully avoided, particularly among a free and commercial people. They are ſeldom productive of any good; are often attended with much miſchief, and ſometimes with the moſt fatal conſequences: and therefore, though no time ſhould be loſt in providing for our external

ternal ſecurity and internal welfare, yet we ſhould not raſhly adopt ſuch unconſtitutional meaſures as the ſeizing of private property, under the pretence of better *equalizing* it; which is abſolutely incompatible with the principles of a free government: becauſe a free people will naturally be determined to make the moſt vigorous oppoſition to arbitrary and unconſtitutional regulations, which tend to deprive them of their property, and to take away, at the ſame time, their liberty, annihilate their conſtitution, and eſtabliſh a military and deſpotic government inconſiſtent with the ſpirit of freedom, good order, and that love of one's country which every good ſubject ought to have. I am inclined, however, to think, that they have ſuffered their *zeal* to tranſport them beyond the bounds of reaſon; for I can ſcarce believe, that, under pretence of patriotiſm, this doctrine is meant to introduce a regulation truly odious to a free people, and deſtructive of the very cauſe, which, in ſome reſpects, they ſeem to eſpouſe, and invite others to defend. But be their intentions what they will, they are amazingly miſtaken in propoſing laws directly repugnant to juſtice, good policy, and common ſenſe; laws, which would occaſion a greater ferment than theſe gentlemen ſeem to be aware of, without producing the

desired effect, of giving immediate, general, and sufficient relief. It is such a strange method of encouraging manufactures, and of supporting public credit, that I am thoroughly convinced in my own mind it would have a contrary effect, by destroying the security of property, and, of consequence, the good faith and harmony which ought to subsist between subject and government, upon which private, but more especially public credit depends. For if we allow foreigners to have but an ordinary share of common sense, they will certainly be circumspect in their dealings with us, and place a confidence in us only in proportion to our good faith among ourselves; that is, between the government and the subject; naturally concluding, that, if private property is liable to be seized, it would be hazarding too much to place their money in our funds, while the state is subject to a general-sponge, or bankruptcy, and the property of individuals liable to be confiscated to pay off the debts and demands of the government.

The remedy, therefore, proposed by some people, of opening the large veins, to make a copious discharge of the rich blood, is precipitate, unnatural, unconstitutional, and impracticable.

True it is, that the *inattention* of past ministers to the real interest of the state, their

connivance at monopolies, and laws unfavourable to domeſtic policy, are the cauſe of the preſent complaints of the people, which ought, if poſſible, to be immediately removed. But this can be done only by *the ſteady attention of the preſent miniſtry to the natural reſources and the true intereſt of their country.*

THE ſituation of Great-Britain is like that of the prodigal ſon. We have great plenty, but bad management. While ſome, who are either more wiſe or more cunning than the reſt, grow rich with the *ſpoil*, others are neglected and ſuffered to ſtarve; and, in the mean time, our patrimony is abſolutely ruined by the diſſipation of ſtewards, and the extravagance of ſervants.

WE are happily bleſt with a rich ſoil, flouriſhing manufactures, and an extenſive trade; and theſe, were they properly improved, would ſoon be productive of ſuch excellent effects, as would effectually relieve us from all our diſtreſſes.

GOOD policy requires, that the firſt ſtep to be taken for this purpoſe, ſhould be to *eaſe the burthen of the labouring people*, by ſuppreſſing every ſpecies of domeſtic monopolization, foreſtalling, regrating, or under whatever other title or denomination the infamous and villainous methods, that are uſually practiſed for grinding and griping the public, may come: which, by confining

confining to *a few* that which is intended for the benefit of *all*, create an artificial ſcarcity, and advance the prices to *double* of what they would be, was every kind of domeſtic and foreign produce brought to market, under proper regulations.

THIS, I apprehend, would be a more natural and conſtitutional method of *equalizing* property, than ſeizing upon the property of individuals. It would ſuddenly lower the prices of all kinds of proviſions, and thereby give the people immediate relief. While this is doing, let our ports be opened for a few months, but as few as is poſſible, and indiſpenſably neceſſary; for it ſhould be always remembered, that imports hurt a trading ſtate. The proviſions brought into the kingdom by theſe means, together with our own produce, would ſoon create plenty, and keep the prices at a *reaſonable* ſtandard. But unleſs monopolies are totally prevented, it will be of no advantage to the artificer and labourer to throw our ports open; as foreign merchants in the firſt, and our own merchants in the next place, will require advanced prices in proportion to the neceſſity of the conſumer; and the few monopolizers at home (few in compariſon of the whole body of the people) contribute ſtill further to increaſe theſe prices. It is well known, this is the

natural courſe of trade; for merchants, and every other ſort of traders, always act from motives of ſelf-intereſt, not from thoſe of humanity or public ſpirit. And, indeed, if it be true, as I believe it is, that charity always begins at home, nothing elſe can reaſonably be expected of them; eſpecially if one conſider the numerous riſks and hazards which they run: for, after paying an extraordinary price for their commodities abroad, and defraying the freightage, and other expences, they are ſtill at the mercy of the monopolizer; and, as they are often obliged to ſell immediately in order to anſwer the demands of their creditors, the monopolizers, in fact, are the real authors of that artificial ſcarcity with which we are ſo often afflicted: for, by means of their ready money, they have it in their power to buy on their own terms, by pretending either that there is little demand, or elſe that there is great plenty of proviſions in the country, and much more expected from foreign markets, and from the produce of our ſoil; and then, by keeping them up till the public are *half-ſtarved*, they have the ſecond advantage of ſelling them at their own price, either by alledging an imaginary ſcarcity, or repreſenting the impoſſibility of procuring freſh ſupplies. Nor is the diſingenuity of theſe wretches inferior to their

avarice;

avarice; for they artfully inſinuate, that it is abſolutely impoſſible to make an artificial ſcarcity, inaſmuch as proviſions are a periſhable commodity. But that this aſſertion is, in a great meaſure, falſe, appears evidently from hence, that proviſions, if properly lodged, are little liable to periſh in a cold climate, and eſpecially in a country where great numbers of people (as is the caſe in our own, notwithſtanding our impolitic migrations to the colonies, and the pernicious effects of the marriage-act) occaſions a general and ſpeedy conſumption. And, indeed, ſo exorbitant are the gains which the monopolizers make, that were one half of their commodities to be ſpoiled, or thrown into the river, (in imitation of the Dutch, who ſometimes, to create a ſcarcity of their ſpices, throw away one half, the better to keep up the price of the reſt) their profits would ſtill be unconſcionably great.

Such are the fatal conſequences reſulting from the practice of monopolizing the products of foreign countries. And as to the products of our own, the arts of the farmer and the corn-factor are no leſs pernicious; nor are the foreſtaller and regrater behind-hand with them in the villainous art of accumulating wealth for themſelves, at the expence of

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ruining the reſt of the community. A few cheeſe-factors ſhall buy up all of that commodity that is made in ſeveral counties, and having money to advance to the maker, they take the advantage of his circumſtances, and fix their own price; and, by confining the produce in their own hands, they have the ſecond benefit of parcelling it out to the cheeſemongers, or wholeſale dealers, who muſt ſell it in proportion to the retailing people; and to all this the retailer adds his own profit, by which means the conſumer pays moſt a extravagant price: and this is the reaſon of the great difference between the firſt and the laſt coſt; that is, between what it coſt in the place of growth, and what it coſt at the place of conſumption. And I believe I do not exaggerate in ſaying, that the price is *doubled* by theſe iniquitous practices, without anſwering any other purpoſe than that of enriching a few rapacious individuals, and miſerably oppreſſing the reſt of the people. For the ſame wicked arts are employed with regard to every other ſpecies of proviſions and neceſſary of life, ſo eſſential to the ſupport of the artificer and labourer. And therefore I am aſtoniſhed that our miniſters are not prompted, as well from motives of policy as humanity, to aboliſh the fatal practices of monopolizers, foreſtallers, regraters, and

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all that ſelfiſh and mercenary crew, who prey upon the public; the rather, as it is well known that government is often blamed for the faults of theſe wretches; and, indeed, it muſt be owned, they are blamed, in ſome meaſure, with juſtice: for, as they have it in their power, and yet indolently neglect to remedy the abuſe, it cannot be pretended that they are altogether blameleſs.

WERE the grower to bring his produce to market, and were it there to be diſtributed in ſuch a manner, that none ſhould be ſuffered to engroſs too great a quantity, ſuch a method would effectually defeat all iniquitous combinations; and every thing circulating through a great number of hands, would of courſe be ſold at a reaſonable price. Where things of any kind are in many hands it is abſolutely impoſſible to keep up their price; and ſhould any holder be fooliſh enough to attempt it, he would ſoon be defeated by other people's underſelling him, and, inſtead of gaining, he would, in the end, be a loſer. For where there are many holders, there things will always be ſold for an equitable price. The neceſſity of ſome, the ignorance of others, and the conſcientiouſneſs of a few, (very few indeed) will prove an effectual bar to the practice either of monopolizing, or enhancing

hancing the price of any kind of commodity.

ANOTHER object, which demands the ſerious attention of the miniſtry, is the practice of ſmuggling, which is deſtructive of trade, and therefore ſhould be prevented, by making it felony. Smugglers are the worſt kind of felons: they rob the fair and induſtrious trader of his chance, and the government of a very conſiderable revenue by not paying the duty, which enables them to ſell cheap, and to grow rich at the expence of the public, and the fair dealer, who is ruined by their illegal practices, for want of a vent for his goods, which cannot be expected while ſmugglers ſell cheaper, and have freſher commodities. This, therefore, is an evil that calls loudly for redreſs: and I am fully ſatisfied that ſeizing the effects and perſon of the ſmuggler, confiſcating one, and hanging the other, would ſoon put a ſtop to it. And if it ſhould be found neceſſary to employ, for a time, a greater number of cruizers, the increaſed revenue would more than defray the extraordinary charge: the fair trader would be benefited by a quick ſale for his goods; and government would not only obtain a vaſt increaſe of *revenue*, but would alſo have the advantage of training up a greater number of mariners.

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THUS, by putting an end to the iniquitous practices of every MONOPOLIZER, the price of proviſions would be rendered, if not low, at leaſt reaſonable. And, by effectually ſuppreſſing the cuſtom of ſmuggling, the government would, perhaps, receive the increaſe of a MILLION annually.

BY ſuch judicious regulations as theſe, all complaints will be ſpeedily removed; and when matters are once ſettled upon ſuch an excellent footing, it will then be time for miniſters to apply their attention to the enlargment and improvement of trade, in order to increaſe induſtry, and give employment to every member of the ſtate. For it is good policy, and the principal duty of every government, to keep a free and eaſily diſſatisfied people in good humour; and this can only be done by taking off their attention from politics, and applying it to ſuch objects as are eſſentially neceſſary towards procuring them a comfortable ſubſiſtence.

Another object, that merits the particular attention of the miniſtry, and which will contribute greatly towards lowering the price of proviſions, is to encourage thoſe manufactures which employ the greateſt number of hands. *Exports* ſecure to us the balance of trade, and find employment for a numerous commerical people; while *imports* enrich other ſtates, and impoveriſh our own. But

thoſe who are moſt eager for promoting our own manufactures, and preventing the importation of foreign commodities, are more zealous than right in their politics; and ſhew a greater regard for the welfare of their country, than knowledge of its true intereſt. For, though our chief attention ſhould be given to our own products, yet it is good policy to encourage (in a moderate degree) the importation of foreign commodities, in order to make commerce reciprocally beneficial; for the friendſhip of trading ſtates can only be maintained by mutual advantages: and, therefore, if we do not take off ſome of the produce of foreign countries, they (from a principle of ſelf-intereſt natural to the human mind) will neceſſarily be determined to diſcourage our commodities, and to prefer a commerce with our rivals; who, if they have not leſs avarice, will yet, for their own ſake, have the good policy to take off ſome of their produce in barter or exchange. And this, it is evident, muſt at laſt be attended with the total ruin of our foreign trade.

BUT, as *a free and open trade* is the very ſoul of a commercial ſtate, the chief object I would recommend to the miniſtry, is the laying open the trade to the Eaſt-Indies. "The company ought to conſider, that, "for many years, even from the beginning, "the

" the very trade to India was hateful, and an " excluſive company more ſo; that Sir John " Barnard propoſed diſſolving the company; " that there are many great merchants, " and multitudes of young gentlemen of " excellent abilities, capable of carrying on " trade; that there are vaſt ſums in parti- " cular men's hands ready to be employed " in any trade that gives profit; and that " the general cry of all is for *liberty and* " *open trade.*"

THESE, in my opinion, are very ſubſtantial reaſons for aboliſhing that famous monopoly, ſo lucrative to a *few*, and ſo detrimental to *many*; and the aboliſhing of it, I imagine, would be attended with the following happy effects:

Firſt, by making the trade to that part of the world *free*, the territorial poſſeſſions of the company could be no longer kept by them, but muſt be put under the care of government as the property of the Britiſh nation; and would, it is computed, with proper management, bring in at leaſt FOUR MILLIONS ſterling *per annum:* not to mention the additional revenue ariſing from the improvement, which, in courſe of time, muſt neceſſarily be made in that extenſive and very wealthy part of the globe.

Secondly, a free and extenſive commerce will be a very valuable acquiſition both to

the ſubject and the government, as the latter is either benefited or prejudiced in proportion to the good or bad ſucceſs of the former. It will, in particular, increaſe his Majeſty's revenue to a very conſiderable amount, which, at preſent, we may ſafely calculate at the rate of ONE MILLION *per annum*. In order to induce the government to lay the trade to the Eaſt-Indies open, I propoſe that TEN MILLIONS be raiſed in the following manner: *viz.* SIX MILLIONS by Great-Britain; and FOUR MILLIONS by Ireland, North-America, and the Weſt-India iſlands. Theſe TEN MILLIONS payable at the rate either of one million, or half a million *per annum*, as may be found moſt ſuitable to the abilities of ſubſcribers; and this whole ſum, together with the five millions ariſing from our revenues in the Eaſt-Indies, to be applied towards the diſcharge of the national debt, and the abolition of ſuch taxes as lie heavieſt upon the ſubject. And I am confident, that every perſon, acquainted with the nature of trade, will view this propoſal in ſo favourable a light, as to be willing to contribute chearfully towards effecting ſo excellent a purpoſe; eſpecially as, by that means, beſides the liberty of an open trade to the Eaſt-Indies, they will enjoy the additional ſatisfaction of relieving the nation from the fears of a

bankruptcy,

bankruptcy, with which it is now threatened; and which, if it ſhould happen, would certainly be attended with the moſt fatal conſequences.

Thus a free and *extended* commerce, by the diſſolution of the Eaſt-India company, will be a more effectual method, than any other that can be propoſed, for *equalizing* property, and reducing the price of proviſions. And this done, the price of commodities requiſite for manufactures will come to its *natural* ſtandard, and be kept ſo by the regulations I have ſuggeſted above. The reaſonable price of the neceſſaries of life will enable the artificer to work cheap; and the low price of labour, with the cheapneſs of the materials of manufacture, will render the prices of our ſeveral valuable exports ſo much more moderate than they are at preſent, that, with the ſuperiority of quality which they certainly poſſeſs, we ſhall be able to gain the preference at all foreign markets, to the utter confuſion of our numerous rivals, the proud Spaniard, the artful Frenchman, and (perhaps worſe than both) the ſelfiſh, undermining Dutchman; who will *all* join to oppoſe the ſcheme for laying the trade to the Eaſt-Indies open, becauſe ſuch a meaſure would effectually fruſtrate the deſigns which they have formed for ruining our trade, and

which

which they only wait for a favourable opportunity of carrying into execution.

The reader muſt indulge me in a few more reflections upon the equity and propriety of laying the trade to the Eaſt-Indies open, and taking from the company the remainder of their charter. And firſt, I muſt obſerve, that it is an eſtabliſhed maxim in politics, that private intereſt ſhould always be made to yield to the public welfare, not indeed arbitrarily and wantonly, but upon juſt and conſtitutional principles.

The legality of the company's charter is indiſputable; but the *juſtice* of the laws, which granted them ſuch *a charter*, and inveſted them with ſuch excluſive privileges, may reaſonably be queſtioned. It is therefore hoped, that the gentlemen of the long robe, whoſe duty it is to explain the law, (but who too frequently make the *abuſe*, not the proper *uſe*, of it their profeſſion) will not throw the nation into confuſion by explaining the letter of the company's charter againſt the ſpirit of the Engliſh conſtitution, which certainly meant, that all the ſubjects ſhould equally enjoy the privilege of a free and unconfined trade, eſpecially when the depriving them of ſuch privilege is manifeſtly prejudicial to the intereſt of the kingdom. Excluſive companies are perhaps neceſſary, at leaſt adviſable,

adviſable, at the firſt eſtabliſhment of any manufacture or branch of trade, whether at home or in diſtant countries; becauſe ſelf-intereſt, the ſtrongeſt motive in the human breaſt, will naturally prompt the undertakers to carry on the project with greater ſpirit and activity, than could poſſibly be exerted by a number of adventurers, who have no band of connection. But, after theſe manufactures or branches of trade are once thoroughly eſtabliſhed, they ought to be laid open; becauſe, if ſtill confined to a company, that company will be thereby enabled to fix their own prices upon their commodities, and perhaps to raiſe them to three or four times what they would be, were the trade laid open. And this, I am told, is actually the caſe with the Eaſt-India company: for tea, I am informed, which now ſells for twelve ſhillings a pound, might, if the trade were laid open, be ſold for three, or, at moſt, for four ſhillings.

I doubt not but the Dutch, and all who are concerned in the Eaſt-India company's funds, will clamorouſly declare againſt the doctrine I have advanced, and endeavour to confute it by conſtruing, to their advantage, the laws concerning property; either believing, or affecting to believe, that the Britiſh conſtitution ſecures the property of individuals from

from all kinds of invaſion; and that, to deprive them of it, is not in the power even of the legiſlature itſelf. But ſuch reaſoning, however ſpecious, is altogether falſe: for the power of a Britiſh king and a Britiſh parliament is abſolutely uncontrolable: and when they have (as in the preſent caſe) nine hundred and ninety-nine in a thouſand of the people on their ſide, they may certainly exerciſe it with the moſt perfect ſafety.

But I argue for the diſſolution of the Eaſt-India company, not only from principles of policy, but alſo from thoſe of juſtice. For it is well known that the company has, in more than one inſtance, forfeited their charter, and, conſequently, their territorial acquiſitions, by uſurping the ſovereign authority of making nabobs or potentates; and carrying on, without any authority from the Britiſh legiſlature, a war for that purpoſe, which, how happy ſoever it may have proved in the event, is yet inconſiſtent with the terms of their *charter*; and, therefore, as they have ſo eſſentially tranſgreſſed, and as it is likely they will continue to tranſgreſs it, as often as they find occaſion, it is both juſt and prudent that the power ſhould be taken from them; it being a perfect ſoleciſm in modern politics, (however agreeable it might

might be to the antient feudal ſyſtem) that any body of men ſhould exerciſe ſovereign authority while they are the ſubjects of another potentate, who will naturally grow jealous of them; and entertain the moſt juſt and well grounded apprehenſions, leſt they ſhould in time become ſo powerful as to endanger the ſtate, of which they are members. But not only have the Eaſt-India company violated the articles of the charter, which they originally received from their native country: they have likewiſe violated the terms of agreement, which they made at firſt with the Indian emperors. The former granted them only excluſive privileges of trade; and the latter made them * royal grants for eſtabliſhing themſelves in Bengal, Madraſs, and Surat; and a ceſſion of a certain diſtrict of land to ſettle upon; with liberty to fortify and govern themſelves by their own laws. So that the firſt principle, upon which the company's ſettlements were eſtabliſhed, was entirely commercial; trade being then the *ſole* object of the united merchants, and undoubtedly the only view with which their CHARTER was granted. But, inſtead of merchants, they have become warriors; inſtead of ſubjects, they have become ſove-

* Vide Lord Clive's Addreſs.

reigns †; and inſtead of confining themſelves to act on the defenſive for the protection and extenſion of their commerce, they have proceeded offenſively, and have conquered a great part of the dominions of the Indian princes: ſo that, let the matter be viewed in what light it will, it evidently appears they have forfeited their charter.

If, agreeable to the ſcheme I have been endeavouring to recommend, the trade to the Eaſt-Indies ſhould be laid open, and the territorial property of the company come under the care of the government as the property of the Engliſh nation, great prudence will be required in the choice of governors and ſervants ſent to that part of the world, leſt they divide the ſpoil among themſelves, and convert to their own private uſe what was intended for the benefit of the whole community. No perſon in any office whatever ſhould have the means, either openly, or clandeſtinely, to make, in the courſe of a few years, ſuch a princely fortune as one million, or even half a million

† And that they act with a more deſpotic authority than moſt European ſovereigns, the following anecdote, upon the authenticity of which the reader may depend, will ſerve as a ſufficient proof. A certain Britiſh general in his Majeſty's ſervice having applied to governour Pigot, for an additional re-inforcement, in order to enable him to attack a poſt, was anſwered, "that unleſs he went with what he had, he ſhould "ſtarve; for that he would give him no proviſions."

ſterling

ſterling; as ſome of the ſervants of the Eaſt-India company have been known to do: a circumſtance, indeed, which gives but too much reaſon to ſuſpect, that ſuch ſervants are more attentive to their own intereſt than to that of their maſters.

THE only plauſible objection I ever heard urged againſt the diſſolution of the Eaſt-India company, is the additional power which it muſt neceſſarily throw into the hands of the crown, which is already too powerful, and which by that means may become poſſeſſed of ſuch an over-ruling influence, as to deſtroy, in a great meaſure, the balance of the conſtitution. This, it muſt be owned, is a point of the utmoſt importance: and the conſideration of it, I may perhaps reſume on ſome future occaſion. At preſent, I ſhall only obſerve, that, allowing it to be an evil, as it certainly is, yet means may be deviſed to prevent its bad effects; and, however great the diſadvantage may be, the advantages, on the other ſide, are infinitely greater.

IF, after all I have ſaid, it ſhould ſtill be found impoſſible or imprudent to diſſolve the Eaſt-India Company, and if that body of men are ſtill to enjoy their old excluſive rights, and their motley character of ſubject-ſovereigns, they ought, at leaſt

while they enjoy the privileges of ſubjects, to be tributary-potentates, and to pay into his Majeſty's treaſury the annual tribute of TWO MILLIONS; a ſum which, I ſhould think, they could very well afford, if (according to a late diſcovery, more honeſt than politic) they are now able to advance the immenſe ſum of EIGHT MILLIONS. Thus we ſhall have ſo conſiderable a ſum as two millions annually going towards the diſcharge of the national debt; which of conſequence muſt, in a ſhort time, be greatly diminiſhed.

WHILE theſe patriotic regulations concerning foreign and domeſtic trade are executing, other means for reducing the price of proviſions ſhould be thought of. TAXES are both odious and dangerous expedients, under injudicious regulations, but under proper ones they would be rendered both popular and uſeful; as I ſhall now endeavour to demonſtrate. Taxes ſhould be laid upon proper objects that can bear them, and upon things not abſolutely neceſſary, avoiding, as much as poſſible, ſuch as affect the labourer and mechanic; becauſe this would prove a hinderance to induſtry; which ſhould ever be encouraged, and not oppreſſed. For example, a conſiderable ſum might be raiſed for the uſe of government upon male and

female

female ſervants. It is impoſſible to aſcertain the exact number of people in Great-Britain under the denomination of Servants. I ſhall, therefore, ſuppoſe 20,000 *Men Servants*, or domeſtics of people in eaſy circumſtances, whether in or out of livery no matter, ſo they are ſervants of eaſe and luxury; by which I mean to diſtinguiſh them from ſervants or aſſiſtants neceſſary for the carrying on of manufactures and commerce. Let theſe be taxed at the rate of a guinea each per annum, the money to be paid by the maſters or miſtreſſes: this would be no hardſhip upon them, as no perſon, who can afford to keep a man ſervant for his convenience, can think much of paying one guinea extraordinary every year towards ſupplying the neceſſities of government.

In the next place, I propoſe a tax on *Coachmen*; that is, on thoſe who keep carriages. Suppoſe, then, 10,000 coachmen, or drivers of carriages of eaſe and luxury, at the rate of two guineas each per annum. I tax them double, for this good reaſon; becauſe it is natural to think that people who can afford to keep an equipage, can as conveniently pay two, as a perſon who keeps a ſervant can one guinea. I think three guineas would be better proportioned; but I ſhall calculate, at preſent, only upon two.

In the third place, I propoſe a tax upon *Female Servants*, at half a guinea each; and ſuppoſing there may be of theſe 20,000, the ſcheme will ſtand thus;

20,000 Men Servants,	at 1 guinea each	£.	21,000
10,000 Coachmen	2 ditto,		21,000
20,000 Maid Servants,	½ ditto,		10,500
			52,500

More or leſs, according to the number.

As an additional tax, I propoſe that three guineas be paid by every perſon who ſhall employ a French domeſtic, and two guineas for every foreign ſervant of any other nation; in order to diſcourage that fondneſs which the Engliſh impolitically, and I may ſay inhumanly, have for foreign domeſtics, particularly thoſe from France, to the great diſcouragement of their own countrymen, who *ſtarve* for want of employment, while foreigners are cheriſhed, and ſo much indulged as to become, in the higheſt degree, inſolent and overbearing. In order the more effectually to prevent this for the future, which is ſo great an injury to the lower, and ſo great a diſgrace to the higher ranks of the Engliſh nation, I propoſe a tax that will be almoſt equal to a prohibition. And if this regulation ſhould take place, either the government will be benefited by the tax, or the prohibition will keep the *ſcum* and *re-*

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fuſe of other ſtates at home, with their load of vices; by which our people will be leſs liable to be corrupted and ſtarved by the ſhoals of foreigners which an univerſal peace is daily bringing into this free and trading kingdom.

A CONSIDERABLE ſum might alſo be raiſed upon HORSES of eaſe and luxury; and a ſtill larger upon HOUSES. Suppoſing, for example, every houſe or tenement taxed at one ſhilling in the pound of the rent to be paid, viz.

1-5th by the ground landlord;
2-5ths by the houſe landlord;
2-5ths by the tenant;

The money to be collected by the land-tax gatherers, without any additional charge to government. The great addition that has been lately made to the number of tenements, and the high rents they now bear, would make ſuch a taxation extremely valuable, without any expence in collecting it.

THESE taxes, falling upon the *proper objects*, would, without diſtreſſing thoſe who bear them, give relief to others in leſs happy circumſtances, by providing a ſupply for government, without burthening the laborious poor; a thing which ſhould never be done, if it can poſſibly be avoided.

ANOTHER meaſure which I would beg leave to recommend to the miniſtry, as a conſiderable

conſiderable help towards diſcharging the national debt, and lowering the price of proviſions, is a reduction of the ſalaries of all places under the government, and a total abolition of all ſuperfluous offices in the Cuſtoms, Exciſe, Poſt, and Stamp-offices, and all other departments in the ſtate; the money ſwallowed up by the poſſeſſors of theſe offices being a great burthen upon the nation, and ſo much the more intolerable, that it is not productive of any other effect than to increaſe the arrogance of theſe uſeleſs placemen, whoſe inſolence in office is become a public nuiſance. I verily believe, that by ſuch a reformation, fifty thouſand pounds *per annum* might be ſaved to the ſtate.

I HAVE often heard it aſſerted, that the ſtamp-act would not have produced more than thirty thouſand pounds *per annum*, after paying the ſalaries of the numerous officers appointed to collect it. If this be true, it is great pity that ſo much diſcontent and diſturbance ſhould have been raiſed by a tax, that would have been attended with ſo little advantage to the public. But, among all the ſchemes that can poſſibly be deviſed for diſcharging the national debt, and lowering the price of proviſions, I know of none more feaſible than a tax upon theatres. Theſe are (as they are uſually conducted)

France, (mothers of effeminacy and lewdneſs) while thouſands of our fellow-ſubjects are abſolutely ſtarving for want, is ſuch an inſtance of folly as one would little expect to find in a people ſo famed for good ſenſe as the Engliſh. And it is a folly too of ſuch a regular nature, that it has not any one benefit attending it; for it would be ſtrange indeed, if people could be benefited by what they do not underſtand.

Nor are we ſatisfied barely with having foreign performers in our operas: the habiliments too muſt be of foreign manufacture, which implies a ſevere cenſure upon our own barren invention: and in truth it cannot be expected, that it ſhould be very fertile, while it is ſo little encouraged.

The tax I propoſe may be raiſed in the following manner: Let *one third* of the price every night, and at every theatre, be appropriated to the purpoſes of government, who may employ a collector at each houſe to receive the nightly amount of the ſaid one third; by which a very conſiderable revenue will annually be brought into the publick treaſury. Nor let it be ſaid, that if a tax is impoſed upon the theatres, the managers will raiſe the price of admiſſion: let them, if they pleaſe, and what will be the conſequence? The theatres will ſtill be crouded: for ſuch is the vanity

and prodigality of the aſs, the more expenſive the pleaſure, it is the more courted; and it is but reaſonable that fools ſhould pay for their folly. It may be queſtioned, beſides, whether the audience (the ſupreme legiſlators in the theatrical ſtate) would ſuffer the managers to advance their prices. It appears more probable, that they would oblige theſe *mock monarchs* to put up with their old prices, and to content themſelves with leſs lordly incomes.

An additional land-tax of two ſhillings in the pound ought likewiſe to be impoſed, and would produce a MILLION *per annum*: and this could be better afforded by the landholder than many of the taxes paid by the artificer. This would alſo tend to *equalize* property; and it would be a great advantage to the publick and to the landowners themſelves, were they to prevent the monopolizing of farms, or the converting the ſmall into large ones. For by dividing them into a greater number, they would, of courſe, give employment to a greater number of people: the lands too in all likelihood, would be better improved; and the owners would have a greater ſecurity for the payment of their rents in a number of middling tenants, than in a few enterprizing projectors. As this is a monopoly of the moſt important nature, and

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the moſt pernicious tendency, and has a conſiderable influence in determining the prices of all neceſſaries of life, it ought certainly to be aboliſhed with the utmoſt expedition. It were well, I believe, if no farm exceeded the rent of two hundred pound *per annum*.

THUS, I think, it is evident we do not want remedies for the cure of moſt of our political diſeaſes, which might be eaſily removed, were our ſtate phyſicians but equally zealous and faithful in the diſcharge of their important truſts: but theſe gentlemen, like arrant quacks, moſt barbarouſly trifle with the diſorders of the nation, the better to gratify their own ſelfiſh and intereſted views.

A CAUTION

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CAUTION,

Humbly addreſſed to the Conſideration of the

ELECTORS of REPRESENTATIVES in GREAT-BRITAIN.

OF all the remedies that can poſſibly be deviſed for curing the diſorders of the body-politic, I muſt not forget which ſhould ever be held the principal, I mean the choice of proper perſons to repreſent the people in parliament. For no man, in the common affairs of life, will place out his property but upon good ſecurity. How careful ought we to be in the choice of thoſe, upon whoſe conduct depend not only our property, but our lives, our religion, our liberty, and every thing that can be dear and valuable to us.

It has, I think, been ſomewhere obſerved, that Great-Britain can only be ruined by her Parliaments; but I will go a ſtep farther, and affirm, that ſhe can only be ruined by the makers of her Parliaments, that is, by the Electors, who may be conſidered as a kind of ſecondary Legiſla-

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tors. If theſe prove true to themſelves, and to their country, we need neither fear the deſigns of domeſtic foes, nor the efforts of foreign enemies; though the danger, it muſt be owned, ariſing from the former quarter, is much greater than that ariſing from the latter.

Such as are our repreſentatives, ſuch will always be our miniſters, who, too frequently, act from motives of ſelf-intereſt or fear, rather than from thoſe of public ſpirit and patriotiſm. Care muſt therefore be taken, to approve ſuch candidates, as have no other qualifications to recommend them, than immoderate wealth, or powerful family-connections. No governors with millions or half millions, no commiſſaries nor contractors with hundreds of thouſands, ſhould be choſen; becauſe the rapid acquiſition of ſuch immenſe fortunes, gives but too much room to doubt their principles, and to fear that they may exert their influence, in a dangerous manner, in a legiſlative capacity. Men of real merit, though of leſs fortune, ſhould be preferred: perſons of knowledge and experience, of approved abilities, and revolution principles. From ſuch, and ſuch only, we may reaſonably expect a due attention to the real intereſts of the ſtate, whoſe propriety depends chiefly upon the conduct of virtuous

ſenators,

ſenators. However limited the power of the crown, and however great the confidence which we all juſtly place in our preſent moſt amiable ſovereign; yet there will always be an oppoſition between the court and the country; and, indeed, it is hardly poſſible that it can be otherwiſe; for each will be endeavouring to acquire an increaſe of new powers and privileges. It is, therefore, your duty to chooſe ſuch repreſentatives, as will preſerve, with proper ſteadineſs, the balance of the conſtitution, without troubling themſelves about the imaginary balance of the power of Europe, towards the maintenance of which we have, to the great benefit of ſome ſtates, and to the no leſs mirth of others, expended ſo many millions of lives and of treaſure.

Another ſet of men, whom I would caution you againſt chooſing to repreſent you in the enſuing parliament, are the officers of the army. The great progreſs of the military profeſſion in this trading country, is juſtly alarming, and may fill us with the moſt well-grounded apprehenſions for the ſecurity of our liberties; eſpecially as we have ſuffered this dangerous power to increaſe to ſuch a degree, that we have now military governors to promote our trade, and of late we had even a military ſecretary of ſtate; which, however meritorious that gentlemen

gentleman might be in other reſpects, was certainly an abſurd and unconſtitutional nomination. For if we have military miniſters, and military magiſtrates, we may expect to become, in a little time, either a nation of ſlaves or heroes; both of which are equally incompatible with the ſpirit and intereſt of a commerical people.

Let me likewiſe intreat you to be upon your guard againſt the choice of placemen. For if no man can ſerve two maſters of oppoſite views, he that is a creature of the court, can never be a faithful ſervant of the public. The intereſt of his conſtituents he will, at all times, be ready to ſacrifice to the vanity, the pride, or ambition of thoſe, to whom he is indebted for the poſt he enjoys.

Nor ought you to be leſs jealous of merchants ſitting in parliament. For ſuch men, thro' their intereſt in the houſe, generally obtain excluſive privileges, contracts, or monopolies, prejudicial to the reſt of the community, and conſequently injurious to a trading ſtate. Nor is this the worſt: elated with the dignity of their parliamentary character, they ſometimes extend their commerce abroad, and their engagements at home, much beyond their abilities, in poverty and bankruptcy; but,

protected

protected ſtill by their dangerous privileges, they elude all the attempts of their diſtreſſed creditors, to bring them to a compliance with thoſe forms of juſtice, which the law has eſtabliſhed for maintaining mutual faith among the members of the community.

FINIS.

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